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VISṆUDHVAJA OR QUTB MANĀR

By

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FOREWORD

BY

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INTRODUCTION

BY

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FOREWORD

Dr. D. S. Triveda, who is well known as a careful and accurate student of Indian History and Philosophy, has utilised his wide reading and analytical capacity to examine the question of the origin and significance of the Minaret known as the Qutb Minar.

Premising his pamphlet with the observation that the correct expression is Manar and not Minar and proceeding on the basis of the style of architecture of the building and the inscriptions therein contained, the author examines the accounts of the medieval historians who designated the Qutb Manar as a towar of the ancient Hindu period and comes to the conclusion that the lower part of the tower differs essentially from the higher and that the former is of Hindu origin. The village Mehrauli near which the tower is situated is derived from the Sanskrit word **Mihirvali** *and* **Mihira** *is equated with the sun. The author concludes that the tower was originally an observatory. Citing Ibn Batuta he states that it was a Hindu temple before Delhi was conquered and that the present mosque was built with the ruins of 27 temples dedicated to the 27 Nakshatras of Hindu astronomy. The 12 sides of the tower represent the 12 Zodaics and the Iron Pillar is the work of Chandragupta, the patron of Kalidasa, who lived about 400 A. D., and whom the author identifies with the son of Samudragupta. The inscription on the Iron Pillar refers to a Vishnudhvaja and the author, translating this term as an Observatory Tower arrives at the provisional conclusion that Samudragupta built three astronomical observatories at Gaya, Mehrauli (near Delhi) and at Phiroz Koh in Turkistan, Dr. Triveda puts forward this view and invites correction and criticism.*

This brochure is a tribute to Dr. Triveda's varied scholarship and historical analysis.

Ootacamund :
11-6-62.

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

INTRODUCTION

I read the VISHNUDHVAJA by Dr. D. S. Triveda with great interest. I have known him for many years and have had occasion to see many of his books and research papers.

Dr. Triveda is a genuine scholar in the real sense of the term. He has been advocating the national point of view in the field of Indian history. He has been carrying research in the vast domain of our ancient heritage for over 25 years.

He has propounded many new and interesting theories as under. According to him the Aryan invasion of India is a pure and simple myth invented by the British; the sheet anchor of Indian history should be the date of Kurukshetra War, 3137 B. C. and not Alexander-Chandragupta Maurya 327 B. C.; Lord Buddha attained Nirvana in 1793 B. C. and not in 483 B. C. . It was Samudragupta who defeated Seleucus Nikator, commander-in-chief of Alexander the Great, married his daughter, and received Megasthenese, the Greek ambassador, in his court, etc.

Thus Dr. Triveda's new theories tend to bring a great revolution in the field of Indian history. One may or may not agree with his views diametrically opposed as they are to the modern accepted views of western scholars and their followers in India. Nevertheless they deserve consideration and serious thinking.

His VISHNUDHVAJA is a fruit of considerable study and research. It is an eye-opener to all serious students of Indian history. His views should not be brushed aside. They should be given due consideration and accepted or rejected on their merits. I pen these lines as a layman with the hope that scholars of Indian history would give consideration to the theories of Dr. Triveda and offer constructive criticism and accept or reject them on their merits.

Dr. Triveda has to work very hard in the face of numerous opposition and difficulties. I would be pleased if Dr. Triveda goes ahead with his studies in the field of Indology to unravel many of the mystries of our history and culture. I wish him all succes in his venture.

VARANASI :
15-6-62.

BIRBAL SINGH
Vice-Chancellor, Kashi Vidyapith.

DEDICATED

TO

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

VIṢṆUDHVAJA

BY

D. S. TRIVEDA

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VIṢṆUDHVAJA

BY

D. S. TRIVEDA

There is a big minaret at Meharauli-Delhi. The tongāwālās generally call it the Qutb. Some people call it the Kutub Mīnār also. It may be noted that the correct word[1] is Manār and not Mīnār as hitherto supposed. Since it is called Kutub Mīnār people are generally inclined to think that the Manār was built by the Slave king Kutubuddin Aibak of Delhi.

There is a Persian tablet under the name of Kutubuddin in the upper storey and the Aibak does not boast of having pulled down the Manār as he does elsewhere and hence Edward Thomas[2] concludes that the Manār was built by Sultan Kutubuddin Aibak.

But it stands to reason why the tablet should be inscribed in the upper storey instead of at the bottom against the usual practice in such cases. The very non-mention of its pillage would go to prove that he destroyed the upper storeys and wanted it to go under his own name. The almost identical pronunciation of the words Qutb and Kutub led to the false prevalent notion regarding its builder. But a destroyer cannot be called a builder.

DIFFERENT VIEWS

According to Thomas the diameter of the Manār at the bottom is 48 ft. 4 inches. It height in 1794 A. C. was 242 ft. The Director-General of Archaeology in India in his letter of August 20, 1958, informs me that its height is 234 ft. 1 inch only. The first balcony is at 90, second balcony at 140, third balcony at 180 and the fourth balcony at a height of 203 ft. from the ground.

In the lower storey the projecting flutes are alternatively angular and circular, in the second circular and in the third, only angular. Above this the Manār is plain but principally of white

[1] The Persian Dictionary by Gyās, N. K. Press, Lucknow, p 460.

[2] The Chronicles of Pathan Kings of Delhi, by Edward Thomas, 1871, London, p. 23.

marble with belts of red sandstone of which the three lower storeys are composed. Thomas is yet convinced that it was built by Kutubuddin Aibak, the Slave king.

Satyakāma Varmā[1] avers that the Manār-i-Qutb was built in A. H. 625 or 1229 A. C. in the imitated style of the Manār-i-Jām built in 1203 A. C. by Giyasuldin Ghuri on the bank of R. Harirud[2] in Afghanistan. Kutubuddin brought Afghan artisans with him to India and built the Qutb Manār of stone whereas the Manār-i-Jām was built of only bricks.

But there is no record in history that Kutubuddin built this Manār. How many artisans did he bring to India from Afghanistan. When did he start its construction and when it was completed and what was the cost involved in it. There is a minaret at Ghazni ascribed to Masaud III who ruled from 1099 to 1114 A. C. This is supposed to be the earliest Manār known so far.

We know that Kutubuddin Aibak, the commander-in-chief of Mohammad Ghuri, king of Ghazni, defeated Pṛthvīrāja, the Cāhamāna king of Delhi in 1192 A. C. He captured the fort. He pulled down the 27 temples there and built his Qubbat-ul-Islam mosque from the temples' ruins. This Manār is near the Qubbat-ul-Islam mosque. And so many think that Kutubuddin Aibak built this Manār to serve as the Mazinā- call tower- to call the faithful followers of Islam for prayer in the mosque.

It may be noted that a mosque has either two minarets attached to it if it is an open enclosure or four if it is a full fledged mosque. No mosque has ever only one minaret attached to it.

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1 Hindustan (Weekly), Delhi, July 13, 1958, p. 9.

2 The Harirud is the ancient Arius river of Afghanistan. It rises in the northern slopes of the Koh-i-Baba to the west of Kabul and finally loses itself in the Tejand oasis north of the Trans-Caspian railway and west of Merv. It runs a remarkably straight course westward. It forms the boundary between Afghanistan and Persia. It loses in the sands of Turkman desert. The Harirud marks the only important break existing in the continuity of the central water portions of Asia.

INSCRIPTIONS ON QUTB

Some ten inscriptions[1] in the Nāgari script can be read on the Qutb Manār. They enlist the kings who repaired it at different epochs in history. They are Pṛthvirāja, Malikadina, Govindapāla, Alladina, Mohammad Shah, Feroz Shah etc. If the Manār had been a pure and simple Muslim building no Hindu would have added to its repair and the Muslim rulers and fanatics would not allow a Hindu infidel to record the same on it.

Maithiliśaraṇa Gupta,[2] poet laureate of India, calls it the Yamunāstambha in his Bhārata Bhārati. Kanwar Sain, Lahore, in a pamphlet in 1913 A. C. ascribed it to the Hindu period. Some say that the Manār was built by Pṛthvirāja for his beloved Saṁyogitā so that she might have a look of the river Yamunā daily before taking her meals. But the non-mention of the pillar erection in the Pṛthvirāja Rāso would go to show that it was never built by the Cāhamāna king of Delhi.

BEGLAR'S VIEW

Beglar[3] was an assistant of General Cunningham. He prepared a comprehensive account of antiquities in Delhi. He

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1 (१) समत् १२५६

(२) पिरथीनिरयः स्तम्भो

(३) मलिकदीन की कीरतिस्तंभ स्वस्ति भवतु ।

(४) श्री गोविंदपलो भोजपलो ।

(५) श्री सुलत्राण अलावर्दी विजयस्तंभ

(६) ओं समत् १३८६ वर्षे चैत्रशुदि ११ बुध दिने श्री सुलत्राण महमदशाहि की कीरति ।

(७) समत् १४२५ बर्ष फाल्गुणवदि १५ गुरुदिने फेरोज शाहि के राजि बीजु पडो याहुडि उस रायो सूचना ना माल्हा लोला लषमणा समत् १४२५ बर्ष

(८) मुहम्मद सुरत्राण की राजि मादव मादि बीजु पडिसातामि दिने घटिका २५ जणकमालाः संवत् १३८२ वर्ष

(९) ओं स्वस्ति श्री सुरित्राण फेरोजशाहि विजयराजे संवत् १४२६ वरिष फाल्गुण सुदि ५ शुक्रदिने मुकरो जीर्णोद्धार कृतं श्री विश्वकर्मा प्रासादे सूत्रधारि चाहडदेवपाल सुतदोहित्र सुत्रपातः प्रतिष्ठा नियातित उदे गज ९२ ।

(१०) गज २६ उदेगज १३१ (मु) वितं गज १३४ शिल्पो सूमनाना साल्हा दारुकर्म धरमु वानानि ।

2 यह उच्च यमुनास्तंभ लोहस्तंभ अह निहारलो ।
प्राचीन भारत की कला—कौशल सिद्धि विचार लो ॥ ११० ॥

3 Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. IV.

gave his considered views on the Qutb but had to recant the same due to political pressure. He considers it a tower of the ancient Hindu period as the Hindus alone were so efficient in geometrical designs to build such a long and grand tower. The foundation of the tower is in the level of the ancient Hindu temples. In course of time the temples were pulled down to build the Qubbat-ul-Islam or Kutub mosque and the mosque of king Il-tutmus.

It may be remembered that the Muslims in India in their early days generally pulled down the old Hindu temples and monuments to build their mosques and perhaps constructed no new buildings of their own before the Mughals in India. Even the Muslim masoleums were built from the ruins of Hindu temples and monuments in the vicinity.

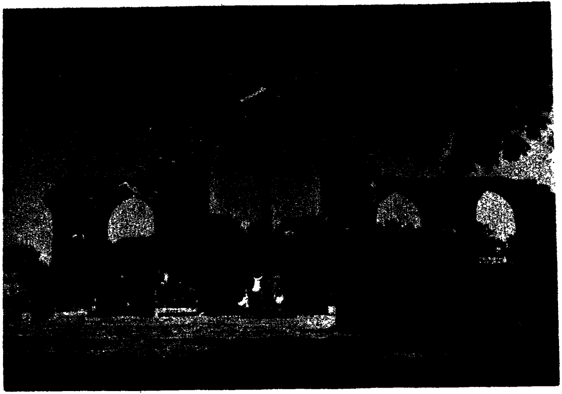
The Hindu edifices and sculptures have been scratched out to wipe out even the traces of its Hindu period. A careful observation of each storey of the tower leaves no doubt about its being a Hindu construction. The sculptures of the lower and the upper portions reveal a mountain of difference. The first three storeys have no traces of cement or plaster which is natural in the upper storeys.

The deep study of Pandit Mayarama, a local school-teacher, emboldened me to study the subject in detail. I was convinced that it could in no way be ascribed to Kutubuddin, the Slave king of Delhi.

SHORT REIGN

Kutubuddin ruled for four years only (1206-1210 A. C.). Had he built it during the reign of his master Mohammad Ghuri, he must have so stated it as he does in the case of the Qubbat-ul-Islam. Had it been constructed during his own reign the fact must have been recorded. It would have been difficult, nay impossible, for him to build such a huge tower in so short a reign or period especially when he was so new to the country of conquest and in the midst of wars and struggles in the newly conquered country.

There are dates viz. 1204 and 1256 Vikrama Saṁvat. They are equivalent to 1147 and 1199 A. C. respectively. These dates are positively anterior to the days of Kutubuddin Aibak's reign. These dates were noted by Beglar but since they are scratched



Qutb mosque, the earliest mosque in India, 587 A. H., built with the materials of the 27 temples observatory pillaged. **(P. 245)**

out to be read no more. And, therefore, it can be authoritatively asserted that the tower is anterior to the reign of Kutubuddin Aibak.

WHY NAMED KUTUB MANĀR?

The question naturally arises as to why it is called the Kutub Manār if it is not associated with Kutubuddin Aibak. It is possible that people call it Kutub Manār in its abbreviated form instead of the Kutubuddin Manār. But a little patience and thoughtful consideration would dispel this wrong notion.

The word Qutb[1] is of Arabic origin and means the iron spindle or axis on which a millstone turns, the Polar Star, the north Pole, prince, chief, a title or degree of rank among religious mendicants. The word Manār is also of Arabic origin and means a minaret, obelisk, steeple, lamp post, place of light. Therefore, the word Qutb Manār would mean the Central or the Observatory Tower.

The tower is at Mehrauli. Mehrauli is a distorted form of Sanskrit Mihirāvalī. The word Mihira in Sanskrit and Mehar in Arabic both mean the sun or constellation. And hence the word Mihirāvalī would mean the cluster of constellations or an observatory.

Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the Manār is anterior to Kutubuddin Aibak and it has nothing to do with the Slave king. We must seek elsewhere the builder of this grand tower. Indian history cannot be studied in isolation. We must look round and put all the cards on the table to draw our conclusions. Beside the tower there is a mosque called the Qubbat-ul-Islam and an Iron Pillar. If we could study all these three together it might help us immensely to reach the truth, and we can know who built this great tower.

QUBBAT-UL-ISLAM

Ibn Batuta (1342 A. C.) says, "Qubbat-ul-Islam or the mosque of Kutubuddin is grand and beautiful. None can stand in comparison to it. It was a Hindu temple before Delhi was conquered. The mosque is 150 ft. in length and 75 ft. in breadth. Its court-yard is 142 ft. long and 108 ft. wide".

[1] The Persian Dictionary, N. K. Press, pp. 341, 447.

There is an inscription on the mosque in Persian. It reads:[1]

"In hesār (ra) fatḥ kard. Wa In masjid-i-jāme rā besākht. Ba tārīkh fi shahūr sanatan sanā wa samānīn baham shame-latab.

Amīr Asifsācār ajal kabīr Kutubuddāulāwaddīn Amīr-ul-Omare Aibak Sultānī Azazullah ansārah. Bist o haft lat butkhānā ke dar har butkhānā do bār hāzār bār hazār deliwāl sarf shudā. But darīn masjid bakar bastā shudā ast. Khodai azzojal bar ān bandah rehmat kunad. Har ke barniyat īn bānī-i-khair doai Imān goyad".

[The fort was conquered in A. H.[2] 587 (1191-92 A. C. or 1113-14 Śaka Era). This Zāmā mosque was built by the great General Amir Kutubudaulavaddin, the best of Amirs, Aibak Sultan. May God help his followers. This mosque was built from the ruins of 27 temples each built at a cost of 20 lakhs deliwāls. May the Gracious Almighty favour him who prays for this great builder].

The Kutub mosque or the Qubbat-ul-Islam, the earliest mosque built in India, was originally a Viṣṇumandira, according to S. Rangacarya[3], reconstructed into a mosque when Pṛthvirāja lost Dehli. But it was actually built with the materials of the twenty-seven temples as recorded on the mosque.

To conceal Hindu decorations every part of the Qutb Manār was plastered and purposely ornamented with flowers and texts from the Koran and designs of various sorts.

27 TEMPLES

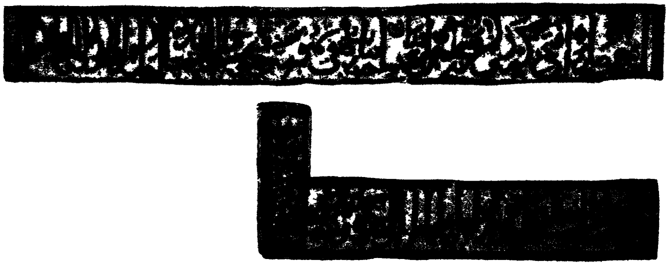
What can be these 27 temples? Had they been ordinary temples of gods and goddesses they might have been built at different costs. But they were valued at Rs. 20,00,000 deliwāls each according to the then estimate. This may lead one to infer that they were not ordinary temples but systematically built with great care. The figure 27 at once reminds us of the 27 *nakṣatras* in Hindu astronomy.

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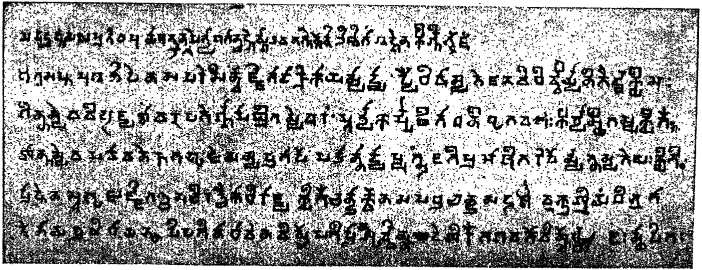
[1] Page's Historical Memoir on Qutb, Delhi 1926, p. 29. and the facsimile herewith.

The formulae AH.+622-AH. 3/100 and AH.+544-3. AH/100 may be freely applied to convert the Hijarī Era into the Christian and the Śaka Eras respectively.

[3] Hindu Temples of Delhi, *The Statesman*, Calcutta, Sept. 14 1958.



Kutubuddin Aibak boasts his gallantry and vandalism in the Persian inscription on the Mosque. (P. 246)



Sanskrit inscription recording the exploits of Samudragupta, Candragupta II and the construction of Viṣṇudhvaja. (P. 247)

NO SHADOW

The Qutb Manār is inclined to the south. I requested the Archaeological Survey of India to let me know the exact altitude, latitude and longitude of the Manār, but it expressed its inability as the same had not been measured by that department. I also requested them to intimate the shortest and the longest shadow of the Manār at 12 noon during the year with dates but here also they expressed their inability as the shadows have not been measured by the department.

Pandit Māyārāma, a minute observer, tells me that the Manār has no shadow on June 23 when the day is the longest in the northern hemisphere. Delhi's latitude is 28.35 degree north, some 5 degrees noith of the Tropic of Cancer. Its longitude is 77.5 east. Therefore, it may safely be assumed that the Manār has an inclination of five degrees to the south as Pandit Māyārāma asserts.

ZODIAC SIGNS

The 12 sides of the tower represent the twelve zodiacs and the seven storeys are symbolic of the seven heavens above. Formerly the shadow of the tower fell in the water below, so that the movement of the stars could be clearly discerned in clear water pool, so that the eyes may not be dazzled and injured by the minute observation of the lights above. These were evidently the temples of 27 *nakṣatras* beside the great tower and they were pulled down to build the Qubbat-ul-Islam. It goes to prove the existence of an observatory at this juncture, alas, now no more to advance the cause of astronomical studies.

IRON PILLAR

Who could have built this great observatory? The nearby Iron Pillar can throw some light on it. The Iron Pillar contains the six line inscription[1] with three verses in the Śārdūlavikrī-

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1 यस्योद्वर्तयतः प्रतीपमुरसा शत्रून् समेत्यागतान्
वंगेष्वाहववर्तिनोऽभिलिखिता खड्गेन कीर्तिर्भुजे ।
तीर्त्वा सप्त मुखानि येन समरे सिंधोर्जिता वाह्लिका
यस्याद्याप्यधिवास्यते जलनिधिर्वीर्यानिलैर्दक्षिणः ॥

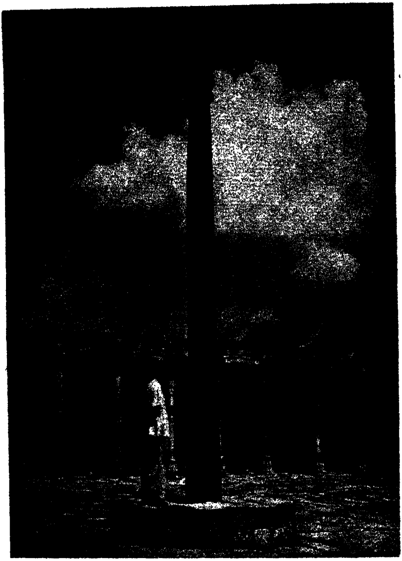
(*Continued on the next page*).

ḍita or lion-thunder metre. The following conclusions may be drawn from its inscription.

1. The king's enemies raised the standard of rebellion. The king fought a battle in Bengal. He defeated them with the help of his sword. Cf. *Vaṅgeṣu, Khaḍgena.*
2. The king crossed the seven mouths of the river Indus and conquered the Bactrians in a war.
3. The south ocean is still fragrant with the cool breezes of his prowess like wind; i. e. his prowess or sway extended to the South Ocean.
4. He acquired kingdom with the efforts of his own hands. Cf. *Svabhujārjitam.*
5. He enjoyed the kingdom for a pretty long time Cf. *Suciraṁ.*
6. He was the one king or an Emperor on the earth. Cf. *Ekādhirājyan kṣitau.*
7. The king is no more in this world. Cf. *Visṛjya gāṁ gatavataḥ.*
8. The Viṣṇudhvaja was built by him Cf. *Kīrtyā sthitasya kṣitau.*
9. The Viṣṇudhvaja was very tall and long. Cf. *Prāṁśu.*
10. The Viṣṇudhvaja was erected on the Viṣṇupada mount. Cf. *Viṣṇupade girau.*
11. The dhvaja was built long ago but its record was inscribed later. Cf. *Śāntasya.*
12. The king was a devotee of Viṣṇu. Cf. *Bhāvena Viṣṇau matim praṇidhāya.*
13. King Candra got the pillar inscribed. Cf. *Candrāhvena.*

(Continued from the previous page)

खिन्नस्येव विसृज्य गां नरपतेर्गामाश्रितस्येतराम्
मूर्त्यांकर्म जितावनिं गतवतः कीर्त्या स्थितस्य क्षितौ ।
शान्तस्येव महावने हुतभुजो यस्य प्रतापो महान्
नाद्याप्युत्सृजति प्रणाशितरिपोर्यत्नस्य शेषः क्षितिम् ॥
प्राप्तेन स्वभुजार्जितं च सुचिरं चैकाधिराज्यं क्षितौ
चंद्राह्वेन समग्रचंद्रसदृशीं वक्त्रश्रियं बिभ्रता ।
तेनायं प्रणिधाय भूमिपतिना भा (भा)वेन विष्णौ मतिं
प्रांशुर्विष्णुपदे गिरौ भगवतो विष्णोर्ध्वजः स्थापितः ॥



Viṣṇudhvaja tablet erected by Candra = Candragupta II, 268 B. C. (P. 249)

DIVERGENT OPINIONS

Divergent opinions[1] have been expressed regarding this Iron Pillar, its inscription, and its builder by recognised authorities on the subject from time immemorial. According to Ibn Batuta the Iron Pillar is in the court yard of the Qubbat-ul-Islam mosque and it was built of seven metals. Thomas Courier (1615 A. C.) an English traveller, calls it a brass pillar. Bishop Heber (1825 A. C.), who visited the court of Akbar II, says that it is composed of eight metals. Manuchi (1655 A. C.) says that it is made of Kāṁsa or bronze.

The Iron Pillar contains 99.72 per cent iron pure. Its counterpart can be had nowhere in the world. It is rustless. Modern scientists have failed to find out its method of construction, composition or process. It is 23 ft. 8 inches long. It is fixed at its bottom with pieces of iron and lead. It is only 14 inches below the surface. It weighs over six tons or 170 mounds. The pillar is of iron, pure, unalloyed. According to Manuchi it is two Dhanuṣas in length and nine cubits in circumference.

LANGUAGE

Thomas Roe (1615 A. C.) says that its inscription is in Greek. According to Manuchi there are some letters inscribed on it which none can decipher. Some say that it is written in Chinese. James Prinsep[2] (1838 A. C.) was the first to read it successfully. Its script is pure Brāhmī and the language is Sanskrit. The Iron Pillar has been ascribed to Alexander, Candragupta Maurya, Anaṅgapāla, Candragupta I, Candragupta II, and Candravarmā of Pokharan. The respective claims of the different kings above are put forth below for the consideration of the scholarly world.

ALEXANDER

Thomas Courier says that Alexander established this pillar as a memorial to his victory over Poros in the battle field. Thomas Roe also holds the same opinion and says that Delhi was the capital of Poros.

[1] Facts and Fancies about the Iron Pillar of old Delhi, by Vogel, Journal of Panjab Historical Society, Lahore, Vol. IX. pp. 71-91.

[2] Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. VII. (1838) p. 629.

Bishcp Heber says that it is of circa 1000 A. C. when the Muslims conquered Delhi. Syed Ahmad in Alār-ul-Sānādid (1847 A. C.) says that Rāi Pīṭhorā (Pṛthvirāja) fixed it on the forehead of serpent Vāsuki to last his kingdom for eternity.

General Cunningham attributes it to Bilhaṇadeva or Anaṅgapāla, founder of Tomara dynasty. Since the king did not believe that it was firmly fixed on the forehead of Vāsuki, it was taken out and refixed; but it remained loose and hence the town was called Ḍhillī, Ḍhilikā, Ḍhilī or Delhi.[1]

DHĀVA

According to James Prinsep the Iron Pillar was established by a king for Viṣṇu as a memorial of victory. It is of the third-fourth century A. C. The king's name is Dhāva. Bhāu Dāji[2] read Candra as the king's name and attributed it to the fifth century A. C.

CANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

John Allen[3] gave a detailed description of the Iron Pillar. This Candra, according to him, cannot be identified with Candragupta and it can have no connection with any king of the Gupta dynasty. Its palaeography proves its hoary antiquity. He surmised that it may be Candragupta Maurya. But palaeography stands in its way of having any thing to do with the Maurya dynasty.

CANDRAVARMĀ OF POKHARAN

Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. Haraprasād Śāstrī[4] attributes it to Mahārāja Candravarmā, son of Mahārāja Siṁhavarmā of Puṣkaraṇa in Marwar. An inscription of king Candravarmā was found on mount Susaniya in Bankura district of Bengal. Here Candravarma dedicated a *cakra* (= disc) to the temple of Cakrasvāmī. There is an inscription of Naravarmā from Mandsore[5] and this

[1] The foot leg of a door is called *Dehali* in Hindi. Delhi is possibly the foot log to enter the Hindustan proper and hence it was called Delhi. Baghdad was once considered the gateway to India. Hiuen Tsang starts his description of India from Kabul.

[2] Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. X. (1875) p. 63.

[3] A Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasty and the Gauda King Śaśāṅka, 1914, introduction.

[4] Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1905, p. 177.

[5] Epigraphia Indica, XII. 317.

Naravarmā was perhaps the elder brother of Candravarmā and hence, according to the Śāstrī, the Iron Pillar of Delhi should be ascribed to king Candra-Candravarmā of the Susunia inscription who extended his sway up to Bengal.

The Susania inscription refers to a king Candra of Puṣkaraṇa in Western India. His family title was Varmā. He bestowed a disc of Viṣṇu in Bengal. The Mehrauli Iron Pillar is also a banner of Viṣṇu referred to in it. The Iron Pillar refers to the king's conquest of Bengal. And, therefore, the Candra of Meharauli and Candravarmā of Susania are the one and the same king, the Śāstrī argued. V. A. Smith[1] concurred with this view of Śāstrījī.

Brajagopāla Bhaṭṭācārya[2] criticised this theory. Candravarmā and his descendants ruled over a very minor territory. They were the vassals of the Gupta Emperors as is proved by other inscriptions. It is hardly possible that such a minor king would instal such a prominent pillar and would describe himself and his predecessors as Emperors.

ORIGINAL PLACE

The word Viṣṇupada misled V. A. Smith and he surmised that the Iron Pillar is not *in situ*. It was brought over here from elsewhere possibly from Mathurā as the Kaṭarā Keśavadeva's temple there is the Viṣṇupadagiri. B. Bhaṭṭācārya holds its original place to be Bactria. Vogel holds that it reached Delhi from Gayā in Magadha and a Tomara king was responsible for its erection at its present site. Vogel thinks it to be a victory pillar referred to by Kālidāsa.

Some hold that this Iron Pillar formerly stood in front of a Viṣṇu temple. According to Smith formerly there was an idol of Viṣṇu over the Iron Pillar but Vogel holds that it had a Garuḍa symbol over it. J. F. Fleet rightly holds that it is *in situ*. The Iron Pillar remained in tact during the course of several incursions in the past as it was in the midst of temples during the days of the Hindu rulers and in the court-yard of a mosque during the Muslim rule.

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[1] V. A. Smith's Early History of India, 1914, p. 290 note 1.

[2] The Indian Review, 1914 p. 190.

There is no cut mark on the top to suppose the existence of the alleged Viṣṇu or Garuḍa image over it. Besides, it is of the same shape at the top as at the bottom. It may be remembered that there are only mounds near Mathurā and no hills. Besides, Mathurā is the cradle of Kṛṣṇa and not of Viṣṇu.

GUPTA DYNASTY

The Gupta kings e. g. Samudragupta, Skandagupta, Purugupta etc. call themselves Samudra, Skanda and Puru on their coins for the sake of brevity. Besides, Candra can be easily the abridged form of Candragupta as we have Bhīma for Bhīmasena and Rāma for Rāmabhadra. This would be clear all the more if we compare the style of the Iron Pillar record[1] with the style of the coins. The Gupta Era or the Gupta dynasty is nowhere mentioned in it and so it has been difficult to ascertain this king Candra exactly. This led the Indologists to express their conflicting opinions and ascribe it to different kings of their choice.

CANDRAGUPTA I

The Iron Pillar Inscription was last edited by John Faithful Fleet[2] in 1888 A. C. and he identified Candra with Candragupta I of the Gupta dynasty. He read *Bhāvena* instead of *Dhāvena* and translated it ' with confidence, faith or sentiments '. He surmised that Bhāva was another name of Candragupta I. According to Smith it is evident from the conquests of Samudragupta that the territory of Candragupta I was very limited and he could not have ruled over Vaṅga and beyond the Indus.

CANDRAGUPTA II

Vincent Arthur Smith[3] and Hoernele[4] attribute the Iron Pillar to Candragupta II of circa 400 A. C. The consensus of

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[1] Cf. मूर्त्यांकर्म जितावनिं गनवत: कीर्त्यां स्थितस्य क्षितौ of the Iron inscription with the legends on coins.

काचो गामवजित्य दिवं कर्मभिरुत्तमेर्जयति ॥

क्षितिमवजित्य सुचरितैर्दिवं जयति विक्रमादित्य: ॥

गामवजित्य सुचरितैः कुमारगुप्तो दिवं जयति ॥

[2] Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III.

[3] Journal Royal Asiatic Society, 1879, p. 1.

[4] Indian Antiquary, 1872, p. 43.

modern historians favours this view. King Candragupta II styles himself a Bhāgavata on his coins and his coins bearing the Garuḍa symbols are also available. In this Iron Pillar also he calls himself a devotee of Viṣṇu. But did Candragupta II possess the high attributes of the record on the Pillar inscription? He lacks those qualities. Candragupta II was the son and successor of Samudragupta.

According to the Iron Pillar record, the great builder of the Viṣṇudhvaja, the observatory, is no more in this world. And so this is the posthumous inscription of the king and it seems to have been recorded by the king's son and successor, Candragupta II. Let us hunt the records of the entire Indian history and see who can come to the high expectations of the different attributes spoken in the Iron record.

CONQUEST OF BENGAL

Kālidāsa (232 B. C.), the author of the three Kāvyas, describes really the conquests of Samudragupta under the guise of Raghu's conquest in the fourth canto of the Raghuvaṁśa. According to the Allahabad pillar inscription and the Raghuvaṁśa[1] he directed his forces first to the east. The conquest was the aim, the enemy rebellion was only a pretext.

CONQUEST OF BACTRIA

According to the Raghuvaṁśa the king followed the land route to conquer the Persians. The lotus faces of the liquor-drunk red cheek Yavana women became pale due to his attack. The cavaliers of the west fought ferociously in vain with the king. The king's troops withered their fatigue on the bank of the Indus river. Even the king of Kamboja could not withstand him.

According to the Allahabad pillar record the king's calm fame, due to his re-instating many a fallen dynasties, had penetrated amongst the Yavanas. The Devaputra, Shāhī, Śaka, Muraṇḍa, and the residents of Ceylon and other islands presented themselves to the king. They brought girls as presents. They besought his

1 वंगानुत्खाय तरसा नेता नौसाधनोद्यतान् ।
निचखान जयस्तम्भान् गंगास्रोतोऽन्तरेषु सः ॥ IV. 36
त्रिकूटमेव तत्रोच्चैर्जयस्तंभं चकार सः । IV. 57.

letter of command under the seal of Garuḍa for the administration of their territories and for freedom.

CONQUEST OF SOUTH

The Pāṇḍya king, according to Kālidāsa, handed over all his pearls collected from the confluence of river Tāmraparṇī with the ocean as if he parted with all his fame. The Allahabad Pillar says that Samudragupta conquered king Mahendra of Kosala, Vyāghrarāja of Mahākāntāra or the great forest, Mantrarāja of Kosala south, Mahendra of Piṭhāpura, Svāmidatta of Mt. Kottur, Damana of Eraṇḍapalla, Viṣṇugopa of Kāñcī, Nīlarāja of Avamukta, Hastivarmā of Veṅgī, Ugrasena of Pālavaka, Kuvera of Devarāṣṭra or Mahārāṣṭra, Dhanañjaya of Kusthalapura and many other kings of south India and re-instated them.

OCCUPATION OF THRONE

According to the Praśasti his kinsmen looked at him with jealousy and so their faces became pale. The courtiers were full of joy. His father's hairs stood erect and he embraced his son saying "You are really the best Ārya". He expressed the sentiments of his head and heart. He looked all round, with his discerning eye, full of tears and after recognising the truth, he exclaimed: "You rule the earth".[1]

It shows that Samudragupta ousted his elder brothers. He came to the throne by the dint of his own force and prowess. He had fought several battles. The prowess of arms was his lonely friend. His body, pierced, bearing hundreds of wound-marks by axe, arrow, śaṅku, śakti, prāsa, sword, tomara, bhindipāla, nārāca and vaitālika etc., looked so beautiful.

LONG REIGN

According to the historians, Candragupta I, Samudragupta and Candragupta II ruled for 7, 51 and 35 years respectively. The reigns of 7 and 35 years cannot be said to be a long reign.

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1 आर्ये हीत्युपगुह्य भावपिशुनैरुत्कर्णितै रोमभिः ।
सभ्येषूच्छ्वसितेषु तुल्यकुलजम्लानाननोद्वीक्षितः ॥
स्नेहव्यालुलितेन वाष्पगुरुणा तत्वेक्षिणा चक्षुषा ।
यः पित्राभिहितो निरीक्ष्य निखिलां पाह्येवमुर्वीमिति ॥

(Cf. *Suciram*) in comparison to a reign extending over 51 years. And, therefore, it would be appropriate to call a period of 51 years only as a long reign.

WIDE FAME

The empire of Mahārājādhirāja Samudragupta was well known in the world due to his religious conquests and prosperity both spiritual and material in the country. His wonderful and generous achievements have long been remembered with thanks and gratitude. He vanquished many kings of Āryāvarta to extend his territories and enslaved all forest chiefs. But he did not crush them. He brought them prosperity.

The king is dead ; yet he lives in fame. Cf. *Kīrtiryasya sa jīvati.* What could have been this *kīrti* or *kṛti* but a noble gift to the posterity for eternity.

SPLENDID ACHIEVEMENT

The king has already completed his actions but could find no time to record the same. The inscription on the cylinder refers to the Viṣṇudhvaja rather than to the cylinder itself. The word *ayaṁ*[1] in the Sanskrit inscription is rather conclusive. The practice of putting a tablet for a well, tank or a monument is still common and the word refers to the nearby memorial.

Besides, the cylinder itself cannot be the Viṣṇudhvaja as a tablet on a well, refers to the well and not to the tablet itself. The Iron Pillar refers to the Viṣṇudhvaja. It is just in the front of the Great Tower–Qutb Manār's gate. While standing to read the iron record one faces the gate of the Great Tower. The Emperor's achievements were splendid. Cf. *Yasya pratāpo mahān.* The word *Viṣṇu* means[2] the sun, and the *dhvaja* stands for a

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1 इदमस्तु सन्निकृष्टं समीपवर्ति चैतदोरूपम् ॥
अदसस्तु विप्रकृष्टं तदिति परोक्षे विजानीयात् ॥
Quoted by Vacaspatya.

2 विवेष्टि व्याप्नोति विश्वमिति विष्णुः ।
Cf. (a) एकादशस्तथा त्वष्टा द्वादशो विष्णुरुच्यते ॥
Mahābhārata I. 65. 16.
(b) विष्णोः पदमिवाकाशं छादितं पाण्डुरैर्घनैः ॥
Rāmāyaṇa VI. 24. 10

banner or tower. And so the word Viṣṇudhvaja would mean the Sun's observatory tower. It would be a wild goose chase to seek elsewhere the Viṣṇudhvaja recorded herein when it could be easily located in the vicinity.

TALL TOWER

The Iron Pillar is hardly 24 ft. long. The word *Prāṁśu* very tall or long cannot be used for such a tiny tablet. The Prāṁśu-dhvaja-tall tower must refer to a different tower. The nearby Qutb Manār–Viṣṇudhvaja is over 234 ft. high. It was necessary to have an appropriate tablet in proportion to the huge size of the tall tower.

VIṢṆUPADA

The Qutb Manār area is surrounded with mountains and hills all along. The writer[1] has shown the three steps of the sun in a line at Gayā, Vipāśā (Bias river) bank near Gurudaspur in the Kangra valley and in Bactria respectively. This Viṣṇupada is in the midst of the hills and in the line of the three steps of the sun.

POSTHUMOUS INSCRIPTION

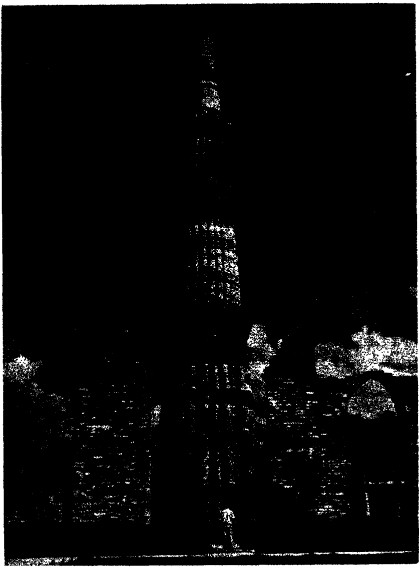
A cursory glance at the iron record would convince even a layman that the inscription refers to two persons. The one is an Emperor *Samrāṭ* now no more in this world. He lives only in fame. The other is a king-*bhūmipati*. He is a devotee of Viṣṇu. His face resembles the beauty of the full moon. So it is evident that the king was in the prime of his youth The face of an old dead king would not be compared to that of the full moon. The last three lines of the three stanza-record would, therefore, refer to the new king Candragupta II who got the tablet inscribed.

Samudragupta had completed this great tower with its observatory. It was necessary to record its great builder. The son and successor wanted just to insert his own name cleverly and that he did successfully. After the death of Emperor Samudragupta, king Candra,=Candragupta II got it inscribed as a posthumous inscription.

King Candragupta II was a devotee of Viṣṇu. He is a *Parama Bhāgavata*. His coins and inscriptions also prove it.

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[1] See Prāñ-Maurya Bihar, Bihar Rāṣtra Bhāṣā Pariṣad, Patna, 1954 p. 130.



Viṣṇudhvaja of Samudragupta, 280 B. C. (P. 256)

SAMUDRAGUPTA

Samudragupta[1] is a towering personality in Indian history. None else can stand in comparison to him. His sway extended from Burma to Bactria, and from the South Ocean to the Trans-Himalayas. He was a younger contemporary of Alexander. When Thomas Courtier ascribed the Iron Pillar to Alexander, he erred on his own side and instead of ascribing the Iron Pillar to the Alexander of the east, he attributed it to the Alexander of the west. It shows that the pillar is almost contemporaneous with Alexander.

Samudragupta was born in circa 245 B.C. He met Alexander in his teens. He came to the throne in B. C. 320. He started on his conquest of directions in 312 B. C. He married Helena, the daughter of Seleucus, in 305 B. C. Seleucus sent his ambassador Megasthenese to the court of Samudragupta in B. C 302. He started the construction of the Visṇudhvaja in B. C. 280. And he passed away from the mundane world in B. C. 269 after a long reign extending over 51 years. His *Kṛṣṇa-caritam*, a fine lyric, is well known. Thus he surpassed Akbar, Aurangzeb, Napolean, Hitler and all during the historical period n the greatness and vastness of his empire, learning and bravery.

OBSERVATORY

Gayā, Mehrauli and Firoz Koh in Bactria all the three seem to be in a line. The Manār-i-Jām, built of bricks, has an inscription at its top instead of at the bottom against the usual practice, to ascribe it to Gyāsuldin Ghūrī. The full details of the Manār-i-Jām are not available. In absence of the details it cannot be ascertained who really built the Manār-i-Jām. The capital of Samudragupta was Pāṭaliputra and he hailed from Magadha. People and kings from time immemorial look towards Delhi with awe and reverence. Sher Shah, another king from Bihar, was crowned in Delhi and he built the Small Rohtasgarh in the north-west of India. It was built of bricke like the Manār-i-Jām. Is it probable that Samudragupta built the three victory towers

[1] *Indian Chronology* 6701, B. C. to 1958 A. C., by Dr. D. S. Triveda, Bhāratiya Vidyā Bhavan, Bombay, 1959.

at Gayā, Mehrauli and in Afghanistan. They were possibly pulled down and converted to suit the local fancy of the ruling power. Of course, there is no trace or record of any at Gayā.

Thus we find that there is one and only one king in the name of Samudragupta who fulfils all the attiributes[1] of the great emperor described in the Iron Pillar inscription. His exploits described herein are also supported by other extant evidences.

SATYAMEVA JAYATE

To ascribe the Qutb Manār to a king of the Hindu period may be an act of patriotism; but it is no truth, it is no honesty, a critic avers. It is hardly desirable to change the course of history to gain a bit of patriotism, he adds.

Indian history has been distorted and many a truth sacrificed in it. I would urge the scholars to search the truth and accept nothing but the truth, unalloyed, unpolished. It is strange that Indian scholars have yet no guts either to accept or reject a theory even though based on solid facts and sound reasons. Many of them suffer from inferiority complex. But I am sure truth triumphs in the end, *Satyameva jayate*.

MINUTE OBSERVERS

The writer visited the Qutb in 1955 in the company of Srī Brajakṛṣṇa Cāndivāla,[2] Convenor, Bhārata Sevaka Samāja, Delhi, Śrī Śeṣagiri Rao, an M. P., and an engineer. They were all impressed with the explanations advanced in support of the new theory. They opined that although it could not be regarded an observatory in the modern sense of the term it could be easily converted into a modern one with certain additions and modifications.

CONCLUSION

Thus after taking all the pros and cons of the question and a thorough study of the inscriptions on the Iron Pillar, Qubbat-ul-Islam and the Qutb Manār it can be concluded that the *Prāṁśu* (=tall) *Viṣṇu* (=sun) *dhvaja* (=tower) was built by Emperor

[1] Nāgari Pracāriṇī Patrikā, Vol. 62. 203-211. Viṣṇudhvaja. by D.S.T.

[2] Dilli ki Khoja, Publications Division, Delhi, 1958.

Samudragupta whose son and successor Candragupta II got the Iron Pillar Tablet inscribed in 268 B. C. immediately after his succession to the throne. The Iron Pillar is a posthumous tablet of the Viṣṇudhvaja, the Qutb Manār, with its 27 temples which were pulled down by Kutubuddin Aibak, the Slave king, to build his mosque as there was a belief current that no Islam rule would be stable in India so long as these temples were there.

I discussed the thesis with some scholars. They stressed the need of excavations at the site to explore the traces of at least a few temples there. Would the Archaeological Survey of India kindly see to it.

The copyright of the five photos Qutb Manār, Iron Pillar, Kutub Mosque and the Inscriptions on the Mosque and the Pillar,-vests with the Archaeological survey of India. The same, supplied on payment, are reproduced with perimssion vide the letter 1198 No. of 28.10.58.

The author has an open mind. He is open to corrections. He would be glad to be put on the right path. Will the scholars come forward with their criticisms, and judgment? *Tamaso mā Jyotir gamaya*

I requested in vain Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Bihar Governor, and Professor Humayun Kabir Union Minister for Scientific Reserch and Cultural a Affairs, to go through the paper to add their foreword, preface, introduction or comments.

PROFESSOR HABIB

Professor Mohammad Habib, Aligarh University, advised me in his letter to request some one who is both an astronomer and a Sanskritist to prove that the Qutb Manār was built by Samudragupta in 280 B. C.

" Persian books, like the TAJUL MA-ASIR written in the time of Shamsuddin Iltutmish (1211-36) say that he built the Qutb Minar. (2) Inscriptions on the Minar are to the same effect. (3) There is an unfinished Minar in the neighbourhood, which Amir Khusru attributes to Allauddin Khalji.

Further, present day Sanskrit scholars put Aśoka and not Samudragupta in 280 B.C. They also say that the classical period of Hindu Mathematics developed during the age of the Guptas. Trigonometry was invented.

" What was the nature of Indian astronomical knowledge in 280 B.C. ? What sort of observatories did they build then ? Has any observatory of 280 B.C. survived ? In what way could the Quth Minar be used as an observatory ? What were the observatory instruments of those days and how were they put in the building ? Have any of their instruments or their features or their descriptions survived ?

"I must confess that I do not know the answer to these questions which are vital to the whole problem, also that if an answer was given I would not be able to say whether it was right or wrong.

" Also, the Archaeological department may have a say in the matter. The rock on which the Minar was built is giving way and the small cracks in the enormous building are becoming larger. It has lasted for 800 years. It could not have lasted for over 2,000 years. Nobody will believe you unless very convincing evidence is produced to upset an accepted fact ".

I am glad the learned professor has been pleased to send his general criticisms on the subject. I am sure the historian might have concluded otherwise after studying the facts and arguments advanced. I regret the Secretary, Post-Graduate Studies, Calcutta University, refused to enter into any discussion simply because I differ from others on the very fundamentals of history.

CRITICISM REPLIED

The Tāj-ul-Māasir (Crown of Exploits or Legacies) of Hasan Nizami is an exceedingly poor historical record. The abstracts given by Sir H. M. Elliot and Professor John Dowson, London, 1869, Vol. II and H. S. Hodivala do not mention the Qutb Manar at all. The only microfilmed copy available to me in Khuda Bux Oriental Library, Patna, is so faint and rather indecipherable. The Aligarh University, I understand, is bringing out a Hindi translation of the same from the original. I shall be glad to consider any texts in original which record the building of the Qutb Manar by Kutubuddin Aibak.

Regarding the fortress at Delhi it says that in height and strength it had not its equal or second through out the length and breath of seven climes. It also says that Kutubuddin built the Jami Masjid at Delhi and adorned it with the stones and gold obtained from the temples which had been demolished by the elephants.

The Archaeological Survey did not favour me with the facsimile or transcription of the alleged Persian record on the Manār even though requested.

According to the chronology accepted by some modern historians it was Bindusāra and not Aśoka in 280 B. C. as the professor puts in. The writer has shown in his INDIAN CHRONOLOGY 6701 B. C. to 1958 A. C. that Aśoka came to the throne in 1471 B. C. and Samudragupta started ruling in 320 B. C.

I confess I am not an astronomer and so I must leave it to great astronomers to come to rescue or prove me otherwise. The several questions posed by the historian regarding astronomy must form the subject of a separate thesis.

The sheet anchor of Indian history, Alexander –Sandracottus synchronism, suggested by William Jones, and pitch-forked by V. A. Smith, has become deep rooted in the heart and mind of the present generation. Would they see to reason ?

The professor gives no reason why it could not have lasted for over 2,000 years.

VIṢṆU DHVAJA — REVIEW

BY

D. S. TRIVEDA

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MISCELLANEA

VIṢṆUDHVAJA — REVIEW

By

D. S. Triveda

Professor Mohammad Habib, Aligarh University, writes (9-4-61): "I have read it (*A. B. O. R. I.*, XL, pp. 241-61) carefully. Your argument, I am afraid, suffers from some vital defects.

(1) The Persian books and inscriptions to prove that the tower (Minār) was built by Shamsuddin Iltutmish are concrete and decisive. It has nothing to do with Qutbuddin Aibak. In Amir Khusru's work, the *Khazainul Futeh*, the tower is referred to as the Minar and the whole place is referred to as the Majid-i-jama-i-Hazrat (the mosque of the reversd capital). But there is no place in the premises where a Muslim congregation could form its rows for prayers—and no prayers were ever said there.

QUTBUDDIN AIBAK

(2) Qutbuddin Aibak has nothing to do with the tower. He has put his inscription on a temple declaring it to be a mosque. But the building is a temple and has always been a temple. The pillars are not in a straight line, and the Muslims could not have prayed there in a row. Besides, the temple has a door on the western side leading to a staircase and such a door is not permitted in a mosque. No Muslim is responsible for what kings and governing classes have done, but it is not permitted by the Muslim Shariat to convert a temple into a mosque or to pray to the Lord of Mankind (Rabbul Alamin) in such an edifice. The terms Quwwatul Islam mosque and Qutb Minar to which you refer were not known to medieval Delhi. Sir Syed in his Alar-ul-Sanadid admits that the old terms are simply the Minar and the Masjid-i-Jami Hasrat, but confesses that he is unable to find when the terms Qutb Minar and Masjid-i-Quwwat-ul Islam came into use.

(3) Delhi was made the capital of India by Shamsuddin Iltutmish in 1213. This is definitely stated by a historian, I-āmi, who collected the materials for his history in the reign of Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq.

(4) The pillars of Anangapāla are a part of the temple. It has nothing to do with the tower.

FANATIC KINGS

(5) I do not deny that the Muslim kings and rulers have been gulity of a lot of temple destruction, also Hindu rājās have always respected Muslim mosques and their tolerant attitude is a distinct! (to me) a painful contrast Still there seems no reason for doubting Amir Khusru's statement that only the stones of temples lying in ruins were used for constructing the Minar.

(6) The word Qutb Minar in Arabic cannot mean an Observatory Tower.

(7) It is not correct to say that the tower casts no shadow on June 23. This would only happen if the tower was on the equator. A vertical rod will cast some shadow at Delhi all through the year.

(8) I have seen the two Ghazni Minars. They are not up to mark. But they stand erect by themselves and are not parts of a mosque. The Muslims followed the Romans in building domes and towers merely as commemorative structures.

(9) You say you have an open mind and yet you quote Beglar, apparently with agreement, to the effect that the Hindus alone were so efficient in geometrical designs to build such a long and grand tower. If you have such a priori idea, discussion and study is useless.

PREACHING HINDU ORIGIN

You should preach the Hindu origin of the Qutb Minar as an article of faith. It can only stand on that basis.

(10) I am afraid that the historians of India who are acquainted with Persian and Arabic will never admit that the Minar of Delhi was built by anyone but Shamsuddin Iltutmish.

I am even more afraid that the dates you give to Aśoka (circa 1471 B. C.) and to Samudragupta (circa 320 B. C.)

will not be accepted by Sanskrit scholars and Indologists. But I have no authority to speak on their behalf.

(11) Your formulae for the conversion of Hijri into Christian Era will not work.

(12) Firoz Koh is not in Bactria, also it was constructed in the early XI Century by the ancestors of Shahabuddin Ghuri. It was built slowly as their resources were meagre.

(13) All the inscriptions of the Minar were copied down by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He had to hang in a basket from the top. Today they could easily be deciphered by a sort of microscope which even universities possess.

HINDU ASTRONOMERS

(14) You say that you are not an astronomer. Still you postulate that there was a lake and that astronomers looked at the stars in the lake. Such an observation is useless except as a recreation. The basis of star observation was the astrolabe, a tube (now replaced by a telescope) moving round a circle so that the angle of the star with reference to the horizon is discovered. The astrolabe, a Greek invention, was developed by the Arabs. Alberuni claims that he brought it into India in XI century.

I can only end this letter by saying that we are all welcome to entertain what belief we like ".

REJOINDER

I am beholden to the learned historian for his candid comments. The manār[1] contains inscriptions in Arabic and Persian of kings like Mahammad-bin-Sam (two), Kutbuddin Aibak (one), Iltutmish (four), Alauddin (one), Firuz Shah (one) and Sikandar Lodi (one). The inscription of Mohammad-bin-Sam on the fourth circlet of the lower storey of the manār reads : The great emperor, the master of the throne of nations, the lord of the

[1] (a) Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi by Edward Thomas, 1871.

I owe the translations to Professor Syed Hasan, Director, Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Arabic and Persian, Patna and Mr. M. L. Rahman University, Baroda.

(b) Asiatic Researches XLV. 481.

rulers of Arabia and Persia, king of kings in the world, the helper of the world and the faith, the glorifier of Islam and the Muslims, the life-giver of justice in the world, the exalted, the victorious kingdom, the haven of pure nation, the greatness of the excellent nation, the bright flame of caliphate, the vastness of goodness, kindness upon the crusted earth, the shadow of God under the two horizons, the helper of the cities of God, the guardian of the slaves of God, the conqueror of the countries in the world, and the manifestation of the divine words, the father of victory, Mohammad-bin-Sam, the commander of the faithful. May his empire last.

The second band or belt of inscriptions (counting from the basement upwards) is also filled with a nearly similar enumeration of his titles concluding, however, with the hither-to novel designation of "Alexander II.".

KUTBUDDIN

Kutbuddin has a record on the defaced lower band of the manār, immediately over the foundation course. The legend duly restored means: 'The chief of chiefs, the greatest of the commanders, the great and the grand of the empire, Kutub".

ILTUTMISH

The inscription over the doorway of the second storey of the manār reads: This building was completed under the order of the king, helped by the heavens, the sun of truth and the faith, king Iltutmish, the helper of the commander of the faithful.

The inscription on the upper circlet of the second storey of the manār says: The great king, the grand emperor, the lord of the throne of nations, the honoured of the lords of Arabia and Persia, the shadow of God on the earth, the sun of the world and the faith, the helper of Islam and the Musl ms, the crown of kings, and emperors, the vastness of justice in the world, the greatness of the victorious kingdom, the majesty of the excellent nation, helped by the heavens, victorious upon the enemies, the bright flame in the heaven of caliphate, disseminator of justice and compassion the conqueror of the countries in the world and the manifestation of the exalted God, father of victories, Sultan Iltutmish, helper of the commander of the faithful. May his country and kingdom last for ever. And may his command and position be exalted.

On the third storey of the doorway and on one of the bands similar laudatory titles are repeated with minor addition and variation. And finally the epigraph over the doorway of the fourth storey attributes the entire structure to the time of Iltutmish. According to Thomas the modifications of his titles and designation alone would indicate the deferred execution of this inscription. It says: The building was ordered in the reign of the great king and the grand emperor, the master of the throne of nations, the lord of the kings of Turkey, Arabia and Persia, the sun of the world and the faith, the exalter of Islam and the Muslims, the possessor of peace and security, the inheritor of the kingdom of Suleman, the father of victories, Sultan Iltutmish, the helper of the commander of the faithful.

ALAUDDIN

Alauddin Mohammad Shah in his inscription says: His exalted majesty, the lord of kings, the propagator of God s doctrine especially with the help of the greatest of the great, the exalted of the world and the faith (= Alauddin), the helper of Islam and the Muslims, the honoured of the kings and emperors, supported by the divine help, the father of victories, king Mohammad Shah or Alexander II, the right hand of the Caliphate, the helper of the commander of the faithful. May his kingdom ever last. The foundation of this building was laid according to ordination and consensus of opinion.

FIRUZ SHAH

The inscription of Firuz Shah on the fifth storey says: This manār was damaged in the year 770 A. H. By the grace of God the Great and Almighty it was repaired by Sultan Firuz Shah. May God the great protect it from all calamities.

The inscription of Sikandar Lodi dated 909 A. H. is on the lower entrance of the Qutb Manār.

INFERENCE

Iltutmish says that the manār was completed under his order. In the other Inscription he contradicts himself and says that the building was ordered in his reign. Alauddin says that its foundation was laid during his reign. Thus no reliance can be placed on such beautiful laudatory and contradictory records. Besides,

it stands to reason why the tablet was put at such a height (180 ft. above the ground) where none could read it easily. Perhaps he was afraid of public criticism and hence to hide his guilt the tablet was put so high beyond the gaze.

PERSIAN HISTORIANS

Persian historians are divided regarding the real builder of the Qutb Manār. According to Ibn-i-Batuta[1] (1342 A. C.) the manār was built by Muizuddin Kaiqubad, grandson of Balban.

Abul Fida[2] (*Tarikh i-Mukhtasar*), Shams-i-Siraj Afif (*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*), Amir Khusru (*Tarikh-i-Ilahi*) and Sikandar Lodi alone agree in calling this pillar the manār of Iltutmish. Carr Stephen attaches no importance to any as it is not usual to name a building after one who repaired, altered or added to it.

Firuz Shah calls the tower the manār of Muizuddin Sam in his *Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi*.

I have no privilege to consult the original texts or their translations. But the authors above may lead us to conclude that many Persian historians, mostly court chroniclers, could have no sense of truth and impartiality. They narrated only one side of the picture and perhaps conspired in vain to trumpet the Qutb Manār to be a Muslim monument. The Muslim conquerors did not cut the root but only the branch and hence the truth is out in the long run.

MODERN HISTORIANS

Dr. Iswari[3] Prasad and Raverty[4] hold that the manār was founded in 629 A. H. (1231 A. C.) by Sultan Iltutmish and is styled the *lāṭ* of Qutb Sahib after a famous Muslim saint Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtyar Kaki of Ush near Baghdad. The Afghans held him in special veneration by the title of Afghan Qutb or Pole but the reason for which does not appear. He was honoured by Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish who offered him the office of Sheikh-i-Islam which he refused. Iltutmish caused the names of

1 Travels of Ibn-i-Batuta (Translated by Mehdi Hasan), p. 98.

2 I owe the informations to Mr. Y. K. Bukhari's letter of 24-5-61.

3 Medieval India, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1928, p. 147 n.

4 Tabaqat-i-Nasiri (English translation), London, 1876, p. 623.

his masters, benefactors, and father-in-law Kutbuddin and Mohammad Ghuri to be inscribed on it out of gratitude.

Alexander Cunningham,[1] Hearn,[2] Blackston,[3] R. N. Munshi,[4] Thomas and Carr Stephen[5] favour Kutbuddin as the founder of the basement storey on the basis of epigraphy, contemporary records and the word Qutb was quite sufficient in their opinion. History is silent about the date of its foundation nor does any inscription on the Qutb Manar record the date of its foundation. Page[6] infers that the manār was commenced in 594 A. H. (1199 A. C.) by Sultan Mohammad Ghuri. This date 594 is inscribed on the central arch of the screen of the mosque built by Kutbuddin Aibak. But it cannot be said that the manār was also commenced in 1199 A. C.

The Afghan saint Khwaja Qutbuddin Kaki visited India during the reign of Nasiruddin and died at Delhi in 633 A. H. or 1236 A. C. ($622+633-\frac{3 \times 633}{100}$) by applying the formulae A. C. = $622+H-\frac{3\,H}{100}$. His resources could not have been so plentiful to build such a big Manar. Besides, Iltutmish was a disciple of Hazarat Usman Haroon, and a co-disciple of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, in whose memory he built the mosque at Ajmer, as reported by my friend Maulana Qasim Hasan, Librarian, K. B. Oriental Library, Patna And so neither the Afghan saint nor Iltutmish could be associated with the Qutb Manar as its builder.

One does not become the master of another's house by simply writing his name there unless he can prove his proprietory right to it on indubitable grounds It may be surmised that the Manar is definitely anterior to the advent of the Slave Dynasty. Kings like Mohammad Ghuri, Kutbuddin Aibak, Iltutmish, Alauddin,

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1 Archaeological Survey of India Report for 1862–63, Vol. I, 202.

2 Seven Cities of Delhi, pp. 21–25.

3 List of Hindu and Mohammedan Monuments of Delhi, Vol. III, 27.

4 History of Qutb Manar, by R. N. Munshi, Bombay, 1911. He holds that it was completed by Iltutmish.

5 Archaeology of Delhi, pp. 65–66.

6 Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 22, p. 19.

Firuz Shah, and Sikandar Lodi perhaps each aspired for its builder by putting his own inscriptions and some of them added to the existing Manar which was partly pulled down and reshaped by the Muslim kings. Some of them repaired it at different epochs like the Hindu rajas.

SHORT FORM

(2) Amir Khusru (1325 A. C.) refers to it as the Manar for abbreviation just as a tongawala now calls it the Qutb.

In the early stages the manārs were attached by the Muslims only to the mosques. But later possibly they served the purpose of victory towers like the Jayastambhs, Kīrtistambha, Garuḍadhvja, Makaradhvaja, Vṛsadhvaja or Visṇudhvaja. This they perhaps learnt during the course of their Indian invasions.

UNFINISHED MANAR

(5) The unfinished Manar to the right has twice the dimensions of Qutb Manar. It was intended for a second mazinah without which a Muslim mosque is essentially defective. The second Manar stands at a distance of 470 ft from the first and was carried up about 30 ft above the grounds or 75 ft above the plinth and then discontinued. It is 2/5 times larger than the Qutb Manar, or 254 ft in circumference and much more perpendicular. Finding the errors it was given up. It was commenced in 1311 A. C. and given up in 1316 A. C. due possibly to the death of its founder king. But since it was designed to be a holy Manar it must have been continued by the successors, if feasible.

AMIR KHUSRU

Amir Khusru's *Khazainul Futeh* (Treasure of Conquests) or *Tarikh-i-Ilahi*, says[1]: "He (Alauddin Khalji) then resolved to make a pair to the lofty Manar of the Jami Masjid, which Manar was then the single celebrated one of the time. He ordered the circumference of the new Manar to be made double that of the old one and to make it higher in the same proportion, and directed that a new casing and cupola be added to the old one. The stones were brought from the hills and the temples of the infidels were demolished to furnish a supply".

[1] History of India by Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III. 69.

TIMURLANG

The Muslims were so inefficient that they could not build a Manar. They had no idea of its construction. Timurlang[1] (1398 A. C) was so enchanted with the great mosque and its Manar that he had a model of it made, which he took back with him, along with all the masons that he could find in Delhi, and it is said that he erected a mosque and a Manar exactly upon this plan at his capital Samarkand, before he left it to invade Syria.

STAGE OF GREATNESS

Delhi has been the stage of greatness where men are the actors, ambitions the prompter and centuries the audience. The Qutb outdoes everything of its kind. It is rich, unique, venerable and magnificent. The pillars of Pompey at Alexandria, the Manar of the mosque of Hasan at Cairo and the Alexandrine column at St. Petersburg all bow their heads to the Qutb.

OBSERVATORY

(6) We generally come across the word Qutbnuma. The Arabic words for an observatory are Rasadkhana, Rasadgah or Marsad in the *Quran.* The compound word Qutb Manar means the Polar, Central or the Observatory Tower by transferred epithet. The Muslims translated the very name of the tower and called it Qutb Manar instead of the Viṣṇudhvaja. Dr. Gorakha Prasad also gives the picture of a temple or an observatory with seven storeys in Babylon.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* there existed no observatory before 300 B. C. Strabo says that Eudoxus had an observatory at Onidus. The first observatory was founded at Alexandria. It continued in activity for about 400 years or the end of second century A. C. Hipparchus of Rhodes, the founder of modern astronomy, discovered the precession of equinoxes and investigated with considerable success the motions of the sun, moon and planets.

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[1] History of Timurlang by Sarfuddin Ali in two volumes, London, 1723, Vol. II. translated from the original Persian.

The Hindu sacrifices and all religious ceremonies are based on observations. No marriage can be contracted till the rise of a particular star in a particular direction. No lady would take water till the moon rises on Karavā Cautha. An Indian still gives importance to observations rather than to mathematical calculations. It is doubtful if he could attain such high degree of precision in astronomy with naked eyes. India had already known the equinoxes etc. during the days of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Varāhamihira (123 B. C.) could not prove the superiority of his solar system over and above the other Indian and foreign systems of astronomy in the absence of practical observations. It is sad that no ancient observatory exists and its descriptions are also lacking. It may be accounted for only due to the foreign inroads when their very existence was at stake. Even the knowledge of Jayasimha perished with him. Some allege that he built the five observatories at Delhi, Mathurā, Kāśī, Ujjayinī and Jayapura based on indigenous sources and resources. But where is even the trace of the Mathurā observatory built only some 200 years ago?

NO SHADOW

(7) It is a matter of fact which any discerning eye could observe on June 23 at 12.00 hrs. In the Jantar Mantar, Delhi Observatory, the northern wall of the Miśra Yantra (Miscellaneous Instrument) instead of being straight, makes an angle of five degrees to indicate clearly the advent of southern precession.[1] The same would seem true of the Viṣṇudhvaja or Qutb Manar, the observatory Tower, which is some five degrees north of the Tropic of Cancer or Karkarekhā.

PISA TOWER

The tower of Pisa, Italy, is now 178 ft. high and overhangs 14 ft. on the south side. Thus it makes an approximate angle of five degrees from the perpendicular by finding the value of Tan $\theta = 14/178$. It is rather curious that the wall of the Jantar Mantar. Miśra Yantra), Delhi, Qutb Manar, Mehrauli. and the Pisa tower in Italy, are all inclined towards the south by five

1 Bharatiya Jyotisa ka Itihasa by Dr. Gorakha Prasad, Lucknow, 1956, p. 229.

degrees. Would an astronomer explain it? Has Pisa tower to do something with the Pisāca tower wherein *ca* was dropped in course of time.[1]

COMMEMORATION

(8) I have not seen nor I have the details of the Ghazni Manars and hence I cannot speak about them. Professor K. Chattopadhyaya, Research Director, Sanskrit University, Varanasi, informs me that Mahmud Ghazna took the models of the Delhi manār with him to Ghazni for construction there. He carried away the Hindu masons from Mathurā to build his mosques and palaces at Ghazni. And the Hindu architects built the isolated manārs at Ghazni like the Qutb Manar.

But if the Manar was built as a commemorative structure the questions must be answered. Why did the Muslims follow the Romans and not the Indians, their next neighbours? What was the occasion of erecting the commemorative structure? When was its construction started? When was it completed? Why was it not named after Iltutmish? Why is it called the Qutb Manar?

PREACHING ORIGIN

(9) It cannot be said that I am the first to preach its Hindu origin. The idea persists since circa 1800 A. C or even earlier. William Butler says[2]: " For nearly a century a controversy has existed in India regarding the architectural honour of the wonderful Qutb. The Hindus would fain that they built it. Bholanath Chunder[3] makes the best case ". Since the dawn of the Christian rule in India there have been two parties regarding the origin of the Qutb Manar. Sir T. Metcalfe led the Hindu party. Syed Ahmad, a Munshi in the service of Emperor Akbar Shah II (1806–37 A. C.), was the first to advocate its Muslim origin.

The entrance door of the Manar faces the north as the Hindus generally have their doors. The door of a Muslim edifice always faces the Kābā. If the Manar had been intended for a Mazinah,

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1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, (XIII Ed.) Vol. II. 394.

2 Personal Reminiscences of India, New York, 1872 p. 159.

3 Travels of a Hindu by Bholanath Chunder, London, 1869, Vol. II. 182–95.

it would have been erected at one end of a mosque. It is customary for the Hindus to erect such buildings without a platform or plinth, whereas the Muslims always build upon a plinth. The ornamental bells in the balconies are undoubtedly of Hindu origin. Stern warriors and fanatics had no time to indulge in art and architecture. Besides no Muslim is ever called to prayer from its top.

Political considerations, after the War of Independence in 1857 A. C., led the foreign historians to ascribe the Manar to the Muslims.

It cannot be denied that once the Qutb was a Hindu construction, but its upper three storeys were pulled down and reshaped to present a Muslim edifice in all its aspects. Beglar is quoted only for the sake of reference to give all the pros and cons of the subject. Its Hindu or Muslim origin cannot be an article of faith with any. It can stand only on the basis of truth and justice.

QUTB

The base of the Manar is a polygon of 24 sides, altogether measuring 147 ft. The shaft is of a circular form and tapers regularly from the base to the summit. It is divided into five storeys, round each of which runs a bold projecting balcony supported upon large and richly covered brackets, having balustrades that give to the pillar a most ornamental effect.

EXTERIOR

The exterior of the basement storey is fluted alternatively in twenty-seven angular and semi-circular faces. In the second storey the flutings are only semi-circular. In the third they are all angular. The fourth storey is circular and plain. The fifth again has semi-circular flutings. The relative height of the storey to the diameter of the base has quite scientific proportions except in the fourth and fifth storeys. The height of the storeys are 90, 53, 40, 24 and 22 ft. respectively.

STRUCTURE

The whole column is perhaps just five diameters in height. Upto the third storey the Manar is built of fine red sandstone. From the third balcony to the fifth the building is composed chiefly of white Jayapur marble. The interior is of grey rose-quartz stone. It is roomy enough and full of openings for light and air. The ascent is by a spiral staircase of 376 steps to the balcony of the fifth storey and thence are three more steps to the top of the present stone work.

LIFE OF MANAR

An engineer tells me that a stone masonary can last for over 4,000 years, whereas one of bricks only for some 2,000 years. The Asokan edicts built of stone, which are at least 2200 years old, according to the present chronological conceptions, are yet in good condition. There seems no reason to suppose why the Visnudhvaja or Qutb Manar could not be over 2200 years old. Besides, the cracks in the tower appear only in the upper storeys, which are undoubtedly later constructions and not in the lower ones

REPAIRS

It was repaired at different epochs by the Hindu and Muslim rulers. It was struck by lightning and was repaired by Firuz Shah in 1368. In 1503 the Manar was again injured and was repaired by Sikandar Lodi. A severe earthquake damaged it in 1803 and the present stone work was imposed upon it in 1847. Butler conjectures that it was commenced in 1200 and finished in 1220 A. C.

JUDGE HISTORIAN

(10) It is not a question of admission. A historian is a judge and not an advocate.

Time alone would judge the truth or otherwise of my dates. But let the historians and Indologists come forward with their criticisms and the writer shall be glad to meet their challenge. The INDIAN CHRONOLOGY 6701 B. C. to 1958 A. C. should open their eyes.

(11) The formulae has been tried successfully in many cases. It works satisfactorily only for the year but not for the months.

HINDU ASTRONOMERS

(14) My own knowledge of astronomy is rather poor but one must consult the latest book on the subject by Dr. Gorakha Prasad, Allahabad University. Pythagoras, a Greek, derived much of his astronomical knowledge from the Indians and the Muslims themselves admit that they acquired the knowledge of astronomy from the Indians and the Greeks (p. 170). The Indians were well acquainted with the 27 naksatras and the 12 rāśis etc. as early as the days of Vedanga Jyotisa before 1200 B. C. (p. 45). The Hindus were pioneers in astronomy.

A scholar's belief is based on materials.

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The Qutb Manar cannot belong[1] to the pre-Muslim period as its architectural features and devices are purely Islamic. There is no other pillar of Hindu origin except the Chittorgarh though of a much later date. Even that has no similarity with the Islamic architecture of the Qutb.

The edged and star-shaped columns (stellate flargs) with alternately circular ones have a peculiarity. They are derived probably from the Manar at Ghazna built by Masud, son of Mahmud, in the early XI century. There were two or three manārs in Iran erected before the Qutb and that may be a source of inspiration for the manār built during the period of early rules of the Slave dynasty.

The inscriptions in Naskh character in Arabic and Persian clearly state that the monument was built by the Muslims. Leaving everything aside one must prove that the architecture of the Qutb is of Hindu origin and the like must be quoted if one wants to assign the erection of the Manar to the pre-Muslim period.

At least this much is certain and unchallenged that apart from the basement storey the rest of the Manar was built by Iltutmish.

CRITICISM

It is a pleasure to differ from such great historians and art critics with reasons. Percy Brown[2] traces the three stages in the growth of Islamic architecture in India. (a) It was the custom after the conquest to ground the fort foundations and pillars under the feet of elephants. (b) The temples of the infidels were demolished besides the hills to furnish a supply. (c) The Muslims were firmly established and were in a position to plan and create. It was only in the last stage that the Islamic architecture in India achieved its greatest splendour. Islam during its early stages could not think of erecting new monuments.

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[1] Mr. Y. K. Bukhari, Dy Keeper, National Museum, Delhi, his letter dated 28-6-61.

[2] Muslim Architecture in India, Bombay, 1942, p. 4.

Havell[1] holds the Qutb Manar to be a victory tower. It is a class of monument in which the Hindus excelled. The three finely proportioned lower storeys of the Manar belong to the original tower. Their exceeding beauty is greatly marred by the upper parts. The tower has architecturally no connection with the adjacent mosque. The planning of the Muslim buildings, whether columns, piers, brackets, pedentives or arches, were almost invariably derivations from Buddhist or Hindu craft traditions, he adds.

It cannot be denied that the Manar has some Islamic influence only in the upper storeys.[2] But the basic question is of origin. The inscriptions may have been added by the subsequent rulers. Iltutmish may have played a part in its present design but he cannot be called its builder.

PATHANS IN INDIA

The Pathans in India[3] had nothing to do with Iran. They copied Indian art and built entirely with the indigenous resources and with the help of Indian craftsmen. There is truth in the suggestion that there was some sort of Manar there and the same was demolished and the present one built upon the same base. It cannot be denied that the Qutb mosque was built with the ruins of the 27 temples there and there was an observatory at the place where the Qutb Manar now stands There are encasements even in the lower storeys of the Manar.

Indian art was very enchanting and pleasing to the foreigners. There was no Sarsenic architecture in India at any stage. Even as late as the days of Aurangzeb, in the masoleum at Aurangabad which he built there in the memory of his wife, he says that its designer was a Hindu Haspat Raya and it was built under the supervision of a Muslim engineer. The main thesis, based on solid data, is highly plausible.

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[1] Indian Architecture by E. B Havell, London, 1927, pp. 46-49.

[2] History of Indian and Eastern Architecture by James Fergusson, London, 1910, Vol II. 206.

[3] Mr. M. Idrisullah Khan, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, Patna, on August 21, 1961.

NEED OF EXCAVATIONS

The theories, hitherto, do not explain the following facts which are satisfactorily explained by the writer in his paper. Why the edifice is a leaning one towards the south and is not parpendicular, which it should have been in case it was built in the memory of a saint or as commemorat on to mark a victory. So far as I know no commemorative tower built in India (i. e. Kirtistambha or Jayastambha, Chittor) is a leaning one. (b) It is not understood how the names of Kutbuddin and Mohammad Ghuri find a place in the basement storey as well as in the upper storey. (c) The mosque built by Kutbuddin near the manār is situated at a higher elevation than the manār. It shows that the mosque was constructed later than the manār.

Whatever may be the origin of the tower the fact remains that the accepted theory can hold water no more. There is a case for closer examination and more detailed investigation. It would be better if excavations[1] are carried on in the premises and on the site to discover the truth.

CONFUSION

Anything which a man happens to find in its real form confuses the people who believe blindly what others say and do not exercise their independence of judgment. Is it not that the Aristotalists in XVII century abused Galileo for his discoveries for which he is today called the father of modern sciences? The canflict is really not between free thought and bigotry but between the spirit of induction and deduction.

CONCLUSION

It may, therefore, be concluded that the Qutb Manar is the Visnudhvaja or the Observatory[2] Tower built by Samudragupta in 280 B. C It is the main tower of the ancient observatory pulled down by Kutbuddin Aibak in 1192 A. C. Its first three storeys are remnants of the old one. Its tablet was inscribed by king Candra=Candragupta II in 268 B. C. on the iron cylinder. Criticisms are welcomed from all quarters.

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1 Mr. Isvari Prasad, I.A.S., Searchlight, Patna, dated 25-5-1961.

2 Observatories of Ancient India by U. V. Rao, Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, July 30, 1961, p. 39.